EXCISE

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Drafted:EUR/CE:RDJohnson:jkr P780184-2064
22135 11/29/78

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Dear Senator Kennedy:

Thank you for forwarding [redacted] B6
inquiry concerning the continuing imprisonment of Rudolf Hess at Spandau Prison in Berlin.

The United States Government believes, as do the British and French, that Mr. Hess should be released for humanitarian reasons. He has been confined for more than 30 years, and is now over 80 years old. Over the past decade and most recently in June of this year, we have made repeated representations to the Soviet Union to agree to Mr. Hess' release. Each time the Soviet reply has been negative.

It is not possible for us, or even the three Western powers acting together, to free Mr. Hess without Soviet concurrence. The international agreements governing his confinement were signed by all four governments, and unanimous agreement is needed to change them.

Despite the fact that we have so far not been successful in obtaining Soviet consent to the release of Mr. Hess, we will continue in the effort. In the meantime we have taken and will continue to take appropriate measures to ensure that the conditions of his imprisonment are alleviated to the greatest extent possible.

I hope that this information will help explain the situation of Mr. Hess and the position of the US Government to [redacted] B6

Sincerely,

J. Brian Atwood
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

The Honorable
Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senate

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY BThomson DATE MAR 2 1 1993
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